

Will the broadcast flag interfere with consumers ability to make copies of DTV content for their personal use, either on personal video recorders or removable media?

I believe that the broadcast flag would interfere with legitimate personal use of content. I would like to be able to make copies for later viewing, perhaps on a different machine than the one it is recorded on. I also may wish to take snippets of material from recorded content for fair use in a variety of ways.

Would the digital flag interfere with consumers ability to send DTV content across networks, such as home digital networks connecting digital set top boxes, digital recorders, digital servers and digital display devices? The entire purpose of the digital restrictions management technology is to interfere with consumer's ability to exercise their legal rights to fair use of content. I am concerned that the digital flag could interfere by causing problems of incompatibility and interoperability. There are a lot of digital devices, and there is no guarantee that the flag would be equally compatible with all. Networking across multiplatform devices already requires careful attention to questions of conflicts and interoperability. Adding the "flag" would just create another problem.

Would the broadcast flag requirement limit consumers ability to use their existing electronic equipment (equipment not built to look for the flag) or make it difficult to use older components with new equipment that is compliant with the broadcast flag standard?

I think it is likely that older equipment will not work with the digital restriction management technology known as the broadcast flag. If older equipment continues to work as it does now, it might be a disincentive for consumers to update their equipment to a more restrictive model. This of course would impact not only consumers, but manufacturers of digital equipment as well.

Would a broadcast flag requirement limit the development of future equipment providing consumers with new options?

As stated above, since there will be less incentive to upgrade, the market for new equipment may soften, making it less likely that manufacturers will offer the kind of innovation that has been driving the technology sector. It may also limit the kinds of innovation that will be available.

What will be the cost impact, if any, that a broadcast flag requirement would have on consumer electronics equipment?

I really don't have the information to answer this question, but I believe it will likely be significant.

Other Comments:

Before you rush to assist an industry which is already making billions of dollars, I hope that you will consider the effect this Digital Restriction Management technology will have on the legal rights and freedom of American consumers as well as its economic impact on manufacturers and retailers of consumer equipment and its negative impact on future technological innovation.